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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BRATISLAVA 000848

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/18/2016
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MOPS](#) [MARR](#) [IZ](#) [AF](#) [LO](#)
SUBJECT: 99 SLOVAK TROOPS TO LEAVE IRAQ; FUTURE DEMINING
AND POLICE TRAINING STILL AN OPTION

REF: A. SECSTATE 174279
[1](#)B. BRATISLAVA 842

Classified By: Ambassador Rodolphe M. Vallee for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)
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[1](#)1. (U) This is an action request--please see para 9.

[1](#)2. (C) Summary: As expected, the GOS October 18 approved a plan for withdrawal of Slovak troops from Iraq in February, [1](#)2007. The cabinet decision also called for: 11 officers to remain at MNF-I and NTM-I; training on Bozena demining equipment by a nine-person team; donation of Bozena equipment; and additional military aid if requested and available. As a result of an early morning request to the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Interior, the GOS also left the door open for training by civilian police, either in Slovakia or Iraq. We need to provide specific details for possible police training missions to the MOI on an urgent basis to lock in a Slovak commitment. End summary.

[1](#)3. (C) Ambassador pitched the options for Slovakia's future participation in Iraq per ref A to Foreign Minister Kubis early the morning of October 18. While Kubis said that Prime Minister Fico's political decision to withdraw Slovak troops in February 2007 could not be changed, he promised to share the points with Fico immediately and to pass on our specific request that Slovakia's cabinet decision would allow for future training that was more robust and more flexible than what was contained in Minister of Defense Kasicky's original plan (ref B). Simultaneously, DATT delivered the same message to Kasicky, and Pol-Mil officer briefed officials at the Ministry of Interior.

Future Training Options

[1](#)4. (U) After the cabinet meeting, Prime Minister Fico announced to the press that 99 Slovak troops would come home from Iraq at the end of their rotation in February 2007 and would not be replaced. He said that six officers would remain at MNF-I headquarters and that five would remain at NTM-I. He mentioned the donation of Bozena demining equipment and potential additional military materiel. Most importantly, he said that Slovakia, if asked, would be willing to provide training on the Bozenas (a nine-person training team) as well as police training both in Iraq and Slovakia.

[1](#)5. (C) Kubis's chief of staff, who was not present at the

cabinet meeting but had been briefed by Kubis, told the Ambassador that the ministers had agreed to discuss ideas for further police training without specifying numbers of trainers or type of training. Defense Minister Kasicky told the Ambassador the evening of October 18 that the police training would be limited to civilian trainers from the Ministry of Interior. The MOD would not provide military police training. He also categorically stated that Slovakia would not consider participating in counter-IED training.

¶6. (C) Kasicky said that on October 19 he will brief the Iraqi Ambassador (resident in Vienna) on the government's decision. Comment: It is essential that the Iraqi Ambassador make a strong request -- or at least accept a Slovak offer -- for continued training by Slovak deminers and police. We will try to reach the Iraqi Ambassador ahead of time to deliver this message. End comment.

What About Afghanistan?

¶7. (C) Kubis said the GOS would like to reach a decision on beefing up Slovak troop presence in Afghanistan quickly after Iraq was resolved. Conversations with Hungarian partners about participation in the Hungarian PRT had been very robust. In fact, Kubis and Hungarian FM Goncz had been strategizing for Fico and Gyurcsany to announce such cooperation after their bilateral meeting scheduled the first week of October. That plan was derailed when Gyurcsany cancelled the meeting.

¶8. (U) Defense Minister Kasicky told the media October 18th that the GOS will consider within the next couple of weeks

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whether 57 troops will move to Khandahar. The major factor is security. Kasicky told the press, "Everyone is aware the situation is drastically different in Kabul and in Khandahar. The entire southern area is the most dangerous in Afghanistan. There are losses every day."

Urgent Action Needed

¶9. (C) Action request: The GOS moved swiftly to finalize its plan for Iraq, and we were fortunate to stick a wedge in the slamming door that left open some flexibility for future police training. However, this door will not stay open indefinitely. In order to secure a firm commitment from Slovakia, the USG must move quickly to provide the Slovak Ministry of Interior specific details on possible missions in Iraq. Post requests that a specific, detailed request be provided within the next two weeks. We also think it would be useful for the Department to pass the message to the Iraqi government in Baghdad that it should actively seek the additional Slovak police and demining training.

VALLEE